

A FARMHOUSE FOR COMFORTABLE LIVING



CORNELL MISCELLANEOUS BULLETIN 18

A publication of the
New York State College of Home Economics,
a unit of the State University of New York,
at Cornell University

January 1954

COVER - Exterior of house as seen from the driveway

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A FARMHOUSE FOR COMFORTABLE LIVING Ruby M. Loper

INTRODUCTION

The house shown on the following pages was designed to meet the needs expressed by numerous farm families. Although their wishes were stated in different ways, and each family wanted some features not mentioned by others, certain desires were emphasized repeatedly.

Sometimes the statements were negative: "We don't want company coming in the back door," "We don't want to run up and down stairs a dozen times a day," or "We don't want the men washing in the kitchen sink."

More often the statements were positive: "Give us more space or at least a feeling of space," "We want more closets," "We have the scenery — let us enjoy it," "We want our house to be beautiful and yet practical for the way we have to live." Often hidden, but sometimes forcefully stated, was the desire for a house designed for today's living — not that of a hundred or even fifty years ago.

These comments, and many others obtained while working with farm families over a period of years, were analyzed carefully. The conclusions drawn from them were then compared with data obtained from a farm housing study made in the Northeast region of the United States.¹ Some of the most significant facts reported in this study were:

- Sixty-one per cent of the families have four or less members
- Two-thirds want extra space for overnight guests
- Forty-six per cent want definite indoor play space for children; two-thirds of these want the play space on the first floor near the kitchen
- Two-thirds want a farm office or at least a desk. Approximately 75 per cent of these want the telephone in the office, and almost as many want an outside door in the office
- Eighty-six per cent want space in the kitchen for family meals, and nearly as many want a place where some company meals can be served
- Over three-fourths want a place for men to wash other than at the kitchen sink or in the bathroom
- Almost all of the families want space where they may do freezing and canning
- Nearly all families do their own laundry and almost 60 per cent want to do it on the first floor
- Approximately 60 per cent want living rooms large enough for ten persons
- Fifty-six per cent want a fireplace
- Sixty-five per cent want storage space for books, magazines, and other articles, usually in the living room
- Approximately half definitely want additional storage space, and it was evident that more families needed increased storage
- Thirty-five per cent want a one-story house
- Ninety-three per cent want porches

¹Beyer, Glenn H. Farm housing in the Northeast. 1949.

A carefully designed farmhouse can perform the double function of providing comfortable, convenient living quarters for the family and of serving as the nerve center for farm business operations.

The comments made by families, mentioned in the introduction, indicate that many existing farmhouses do not perform these functions. Some of the houses were built years ago, when both living and farming were different than they are today. Others, although more recently built, are copies of town houses and do not lend themselves to the special activities connected with farm living. In still other cases, there is no planned relationship between the house and the other farm buildings.

The house shown in this publication was designed to meet the needs of present-day farm living. Certain design controls were established before designing was started. The statements made by the families were used as a guide in determining these controls and in selecting the features to be incorporated. In so far as was practical, the features definitely requested by the families have been included.

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

- Space enough for a family of four who need a two-bedroom house
(No two families are exactly alike in size, age, or pattern of living but over half the families interviewed had four or less members.)
- Flexibility of space use
- Direct traffic lanes
- Ample storage space

- A feeling of openness in some parts of the house, with the possibility of privacy in other parts
- Views of the outdoors from all rooms
- An efficient and attractive relationship between the house and other farm buildings

A level site was assumed and possible differences in the living patterns of families of four were considered.

THE DESIGN

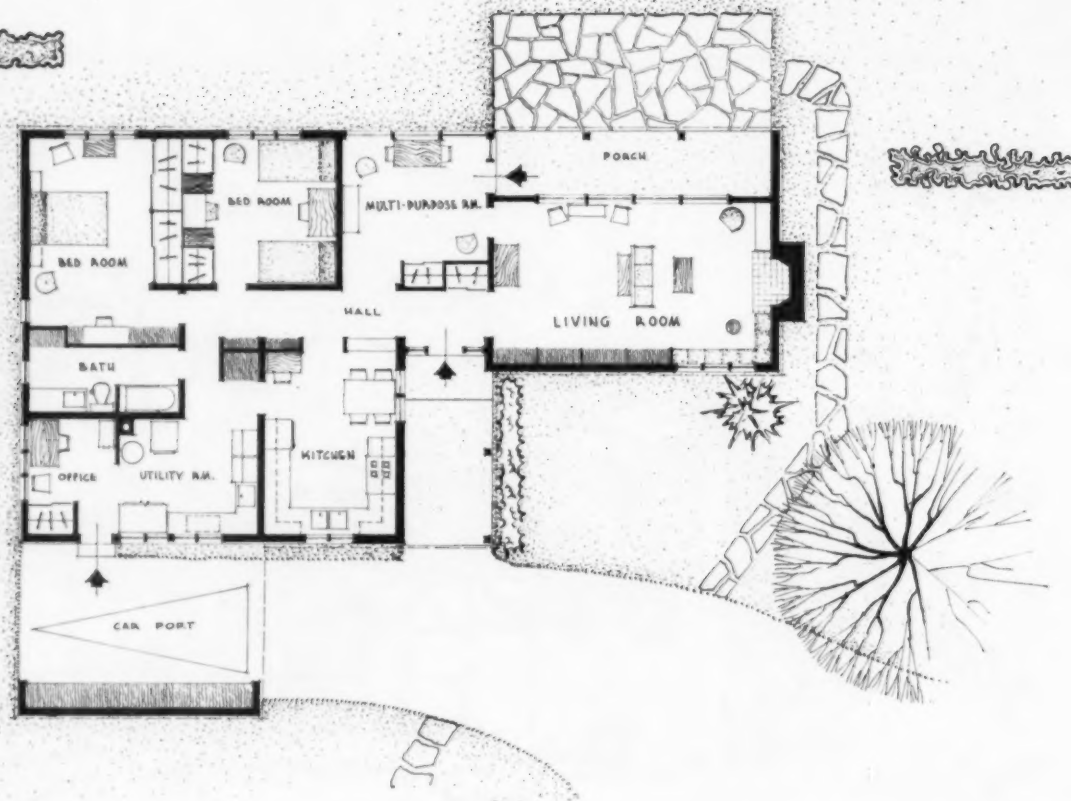
The house is one story only, with no basement. The total floor area, including carport and porches, is approximately 2200 square feet. The long horizontal lines "anchor" the house to the site, and the insulated flat roof serves as both roof and ceiling. Concrete or cinder block construction will reduce fire hazards and maintenance costs. If the vertical joints are struck smooth and the horizontal joints raked, interesting shadow lines that repeat the lines of the house are produced.

The large fireplace chimney provides a terminal accent to the design and effects a balance between the living-room end of the house and the projecting carport.

Figure 1. Exterior of house showing outdoor living terrace, window wall of living room, and door into multi-purpose room



Figure 2. Floor plan showing the rooms and their relation to each other and to the outdoor areas



Plan of House

The plan, shown in Figure 2, includes two bedrooms, a large kitchen with space for eating everyday meals, a utility room, a farm office, a multi-purpose room, a large living room, a bathroom, and ample storage areas. The attached carport has space for the family car, extra built-in storage, and gives weather protection over the rear door. The covered porch at the

front door is inviting and protects guests from bad weather. The living terrace on the opposite side of the house offers comfortable outdoor space for the family and their guests. A minimum of hall space is included but it is located so traffic from the front door may go to any part of the house without going through other rooms. Back-door traffic also can move to any room without going through the kitchen.

The Plot Plan

The house and surrounding areas are shown in Figure 3. The house faces the drive rather than the highway, and both front and rear doors are easily accessible from the driveway. Parking space for guests is conveniently located so callers can reach the front door easily. This parking also eliminates driveway blocking troubles, common on many farms. The space is large enough for several cars and for easy turn-around. The family car can be driven directly into the carport and purchases unloaded under cover.

The parking space also permits easy backing and turning for the family car.

Barn traffic is diverted before it reaches the house but can be seen by the homemaker from the kitchen. The garden area and the drying yard are near the rear door. The house itself partially screens these.

The outdoor terrace and living porch overlook an open yard area that can be defined clearly by plantings. Shrubs of moderate height continue the long lines of the house, give privacy to the outdoor area, and add to the screening on one side of the drying yard.

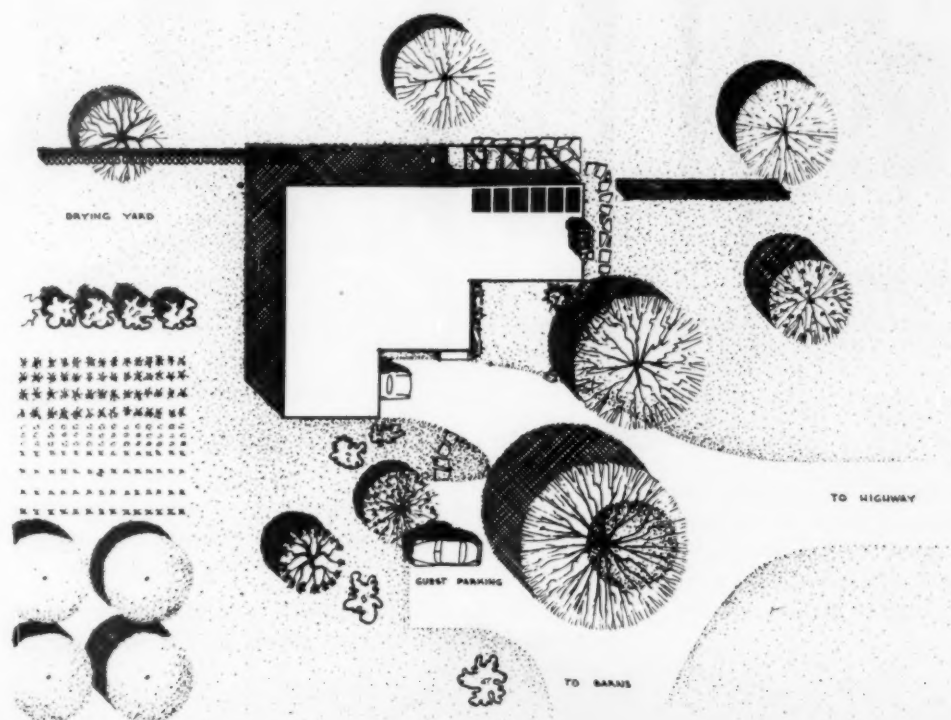


Figure 3. Plot plan showing house in relation to the driveway, service areas, and outdoor living areas

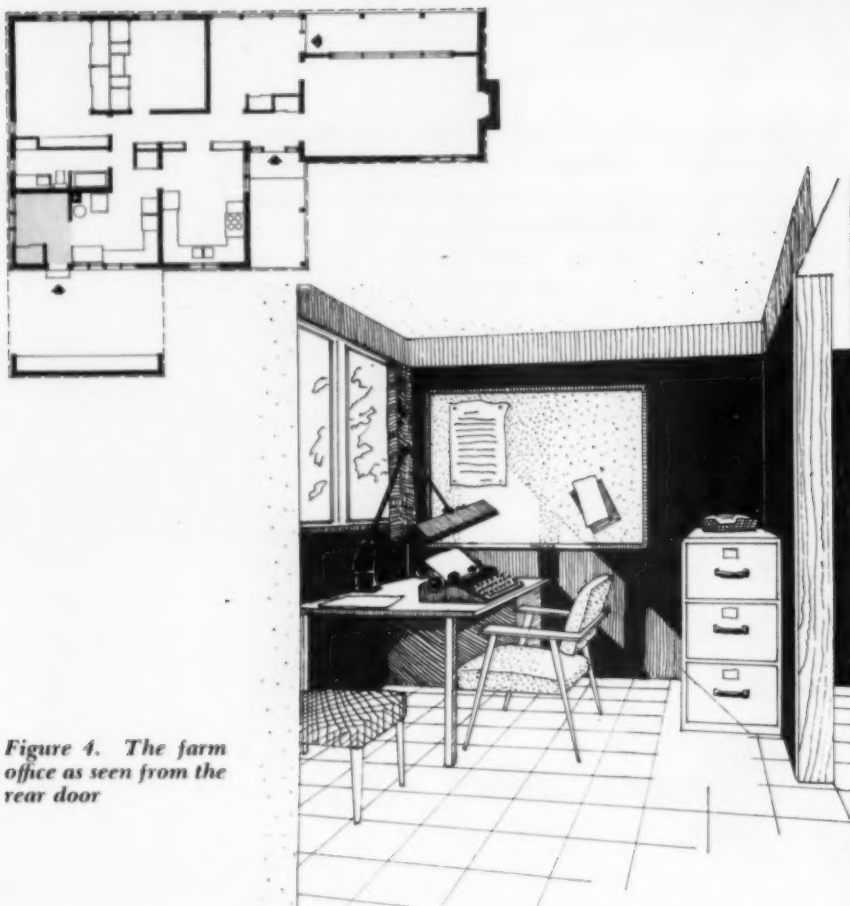
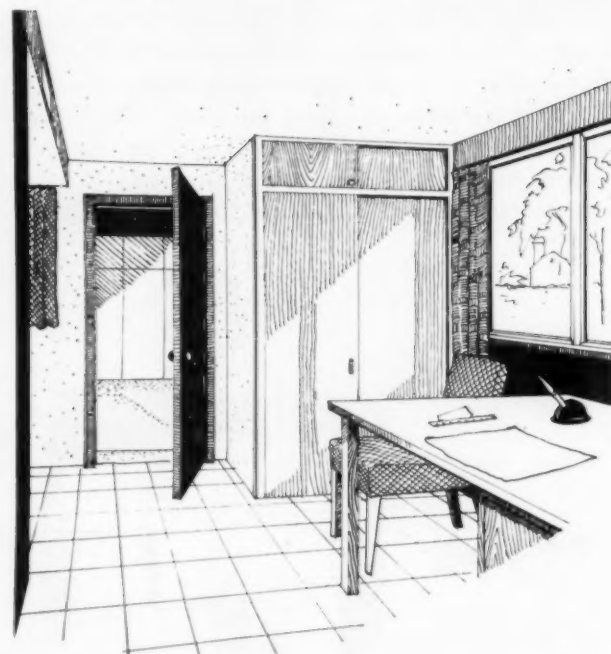


Figure 4. The farm office as seen from the rear door

The Farm Office

The office, Figure 4, can be entered directly from the rear door. Although the room is small, it is large enough for a desk, a set of files, two chairs, and a work-clothes closet. The open passageway between the office and the utility room lends a feeling of space to the office.

Figure 5. The farm office, looking toward the outside door



The large window provides good ventilation and sufficient daytime light. Additional cross ventilation may be obtained during warm weather by leaving the rear door open. Because it swings open against the closet, it will be out of the way (Figure 5).

The office is near the kitchen, so a telephone can be put there and still be convenient for the homemaker.



The Utility Room

Laundry equipment (washer, dryer, ironer, and tray), a freezer, the furnace, and the hot-water heater are located in the utility room. Large windows opening into the carport area give a view of the driveway and supply light for the laundry sorting counter (Figure 6). The counter also can serve as stack space on ironing days. The ironer can be stored under it when it is not in use. The laundry tray provides a place for the men to wash before meals, so they will not have to wash at the kitchen sink or in the bathroom.



Figure 6. The laundry corner of the utility room



Figure 7. The kitchen as seen from the utility room door



The Kitchen

The kitchen as seen from the utility room door is shown in Figure 7. Generous work areas are provided between sink and stove and between sink and refrigerator.

The windows are large and placed where the out-of-doors can be seen from the sink and from the table. Both windows also command a view of the driveway and parking area, allowing the homemaker to see approaching visitors. The size of these windows will assure a well-lighted, well-ventilated kitchen.

Separation of kitchen and hall are obtained by using a partial-height storage partition rather than a full-height wall. This partition has several advantages: it provides handy storage for items used at the breakfast table, it allows the homemaker to see across the hall and through the multi-purpose room (as shown

in Figure 8), and it offers a conveniently located serving counter for meals eaten in the multi-purpose room or in one end of the living room. At times when a view into the kitchen is undesirable, the curtain, which is mounted on a sliding track, can be closed.

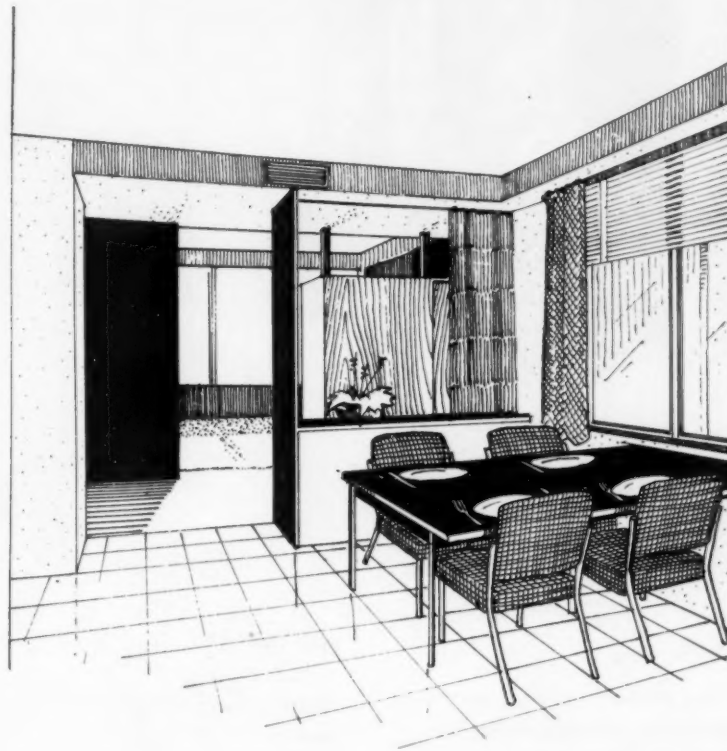
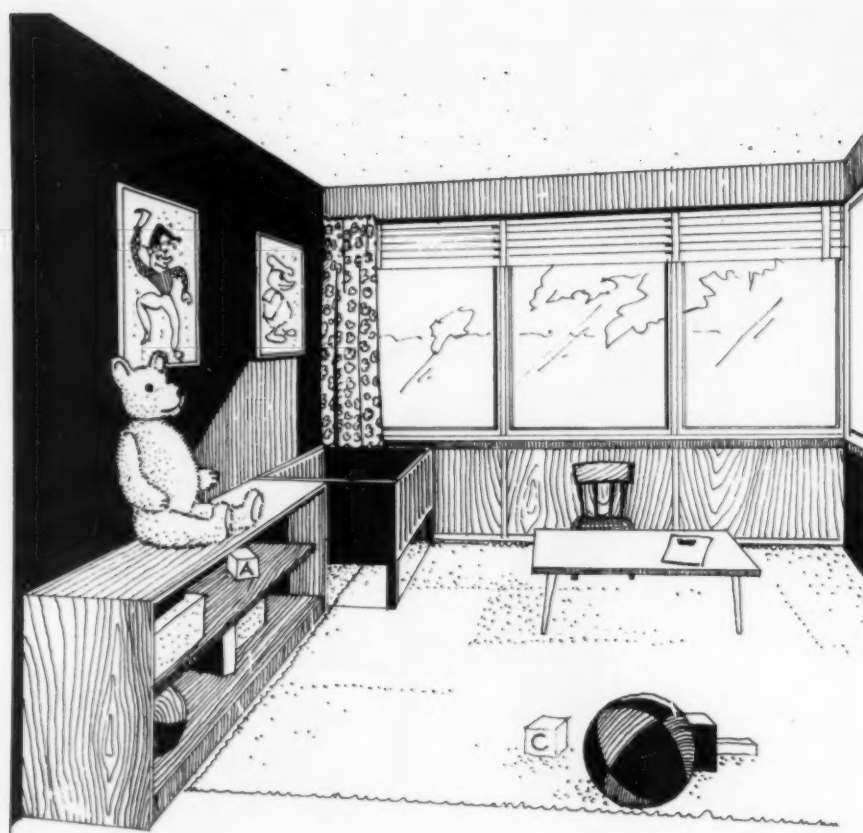


Figure 8. The breakfast area of the kitchen



Figure 9. The multi-purpose room when used as a nursery or playroom



The Multi-purpose Room

This light, sunny room has many potential uses and will give some of the flexibility so often needed in houses. It may be used as a guest room, or as an extra bedroom in case of illness. If there are small

children, it will make an excellent nursery or playroom (Figure 9). The openness that results from the counter-height partition in the kitchen lets the homemaker observe playtime activities easily. The children, too, will feel near their mother without actually being in the kitchen with her.

Meals can be served easily to extra seasonal workers in this room. The workers can enter the rear door, wash in the utility room, and go to the table without going through the kitchen or disrupting activities in other parts of the house.

Families with teen-age children can use this room as a second living room, as shown in Figure 10. Parents or children may entertain their friends in this room or the living room without disturbing each other.

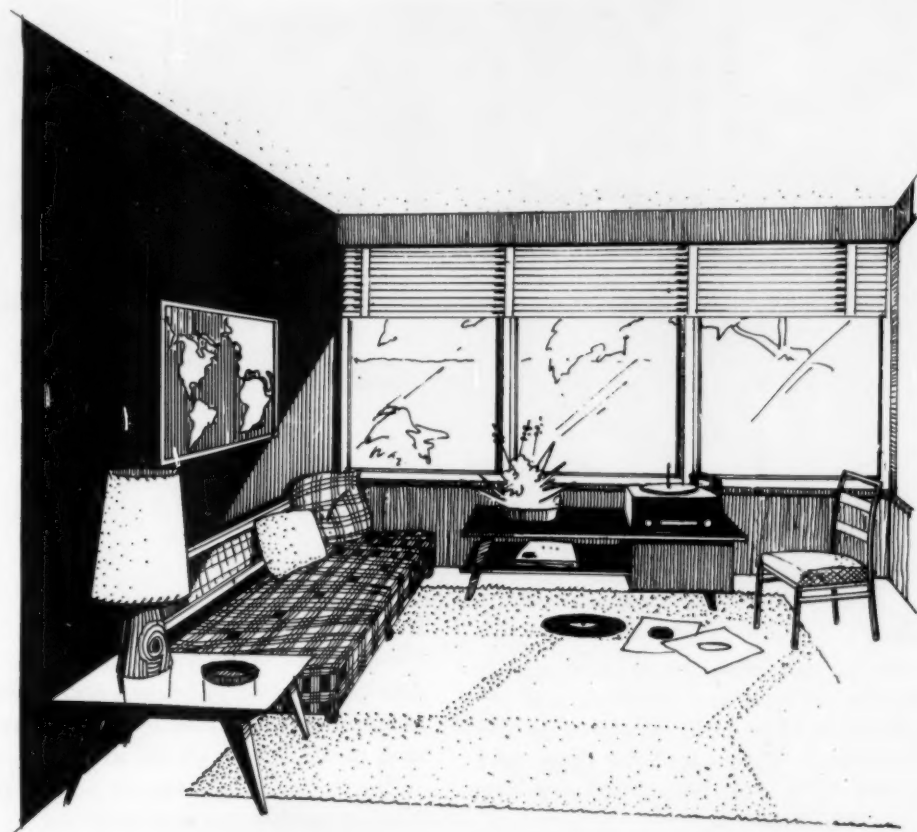
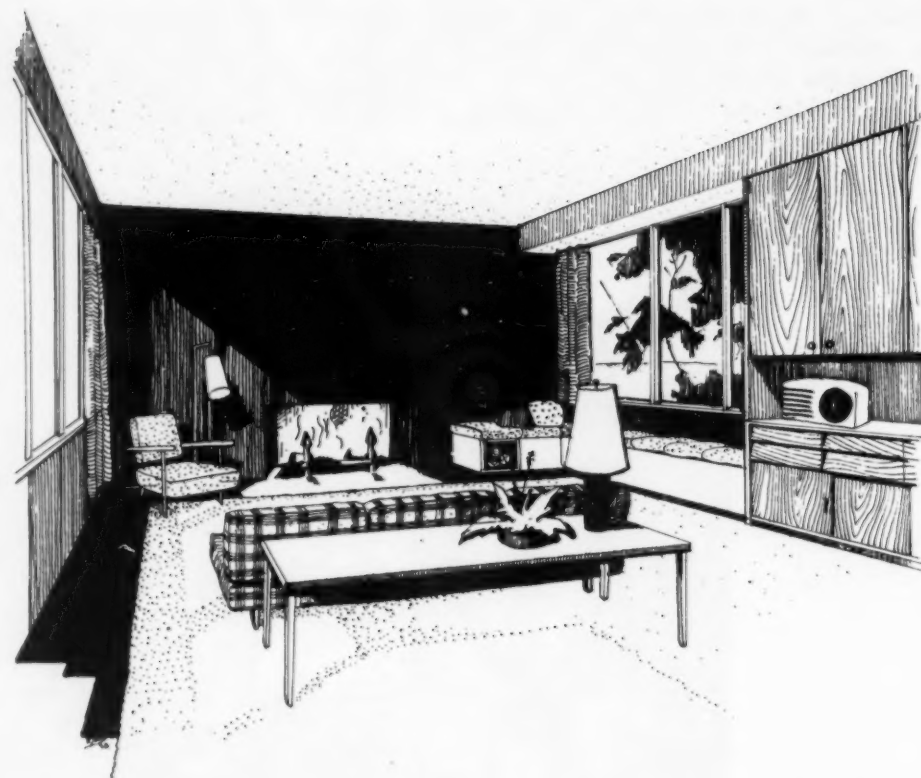


Figure 10. The multi-purpose room when used as a second living room or guest room



Figure 11. The fireplace end of the living room



The Living Room

The fireplace end of the living room is shown in Figure 11. The room is light and spacious, and encourages relaxed living. The large windows on the left overlook the outside terrace and the open yard areas. The entrance drive and the parking area can be seen from the other window.

Built-in shelves and storage cupboards offer space for books, music records, and many other articles. Furniture can be arranged easily, giving the room a feeling of quietness and intimacy. Company or special-occasion meals can be served in the opposite end of the living room. The counter-height partition in the kitchen contributes to ease in serving these meals and

facilitates the removal of dishes when the meal is finished. Dishes, silver, and other items used for such meals may be kept in the built-in storage along the living room wall.

Overhead lighting for the dining area is recessed in the ceiling, as shown in Figure 12. This part of the living room ceiling and the ceiling in the hallway are lower than those in the rest of the house. A large

main-line heating duct is located in the space above the lowered ceiling. Delivery ducts for each room lead off from this main duct. One of the warm air outlets for the living room is shown in Figure 12.

The door at the right goes into the multi-purpose room and provides direct access from the living room to the terrace outside.

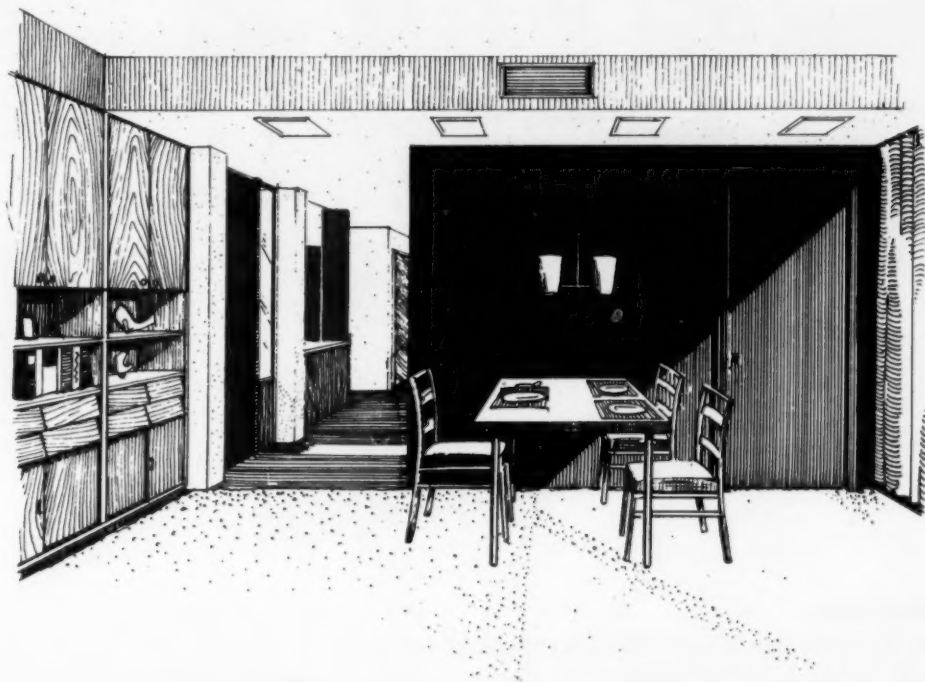


Figure 12. The opposite end of the living room



Figure 13. The storage wall in the master bedroom



The Master Bedroom

A storage wall separates the master bedroom from the children's bedroom, as shown in Figure 13. Each parent is provided with separate clothes hang-space.

Sliding doors are used to make the space easily accessible and to eliminate the inconvenience often found with swing doors. Extra space for luggage, bedding, or infrequently used articles is provided above the

hang-space. Each parent also has drawer and shelf space along the adjacent wall (Figure 14). Here, as in the children's room, a counter and mirror divide

the space. The full-length mirror at the right covers the back of the shelf area that supplies storage space in the bathroom.

Figure 14. Adjacent storage space in the master bedroom

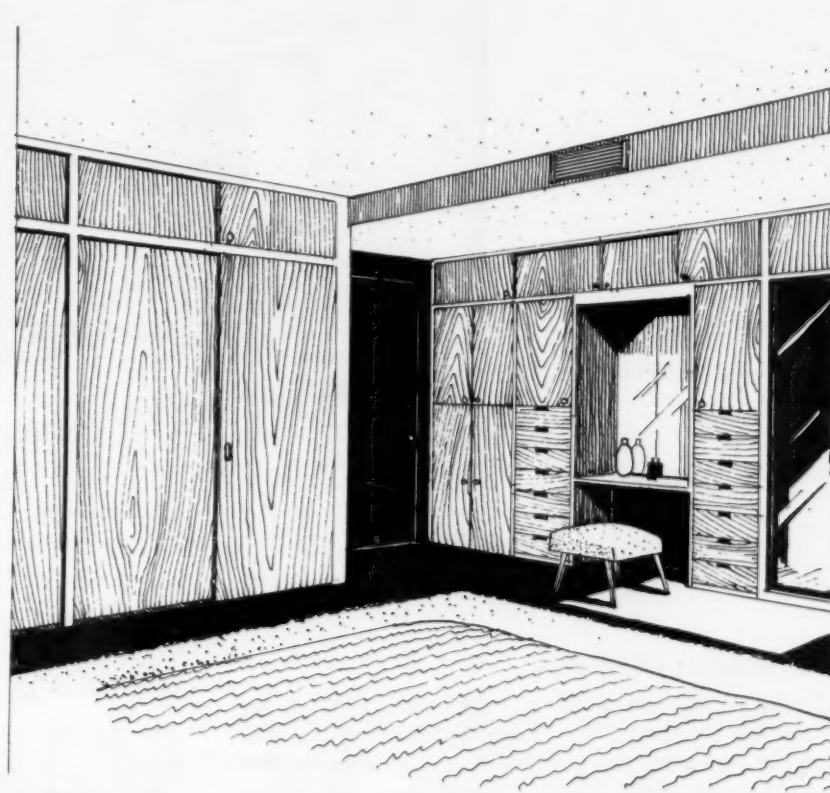
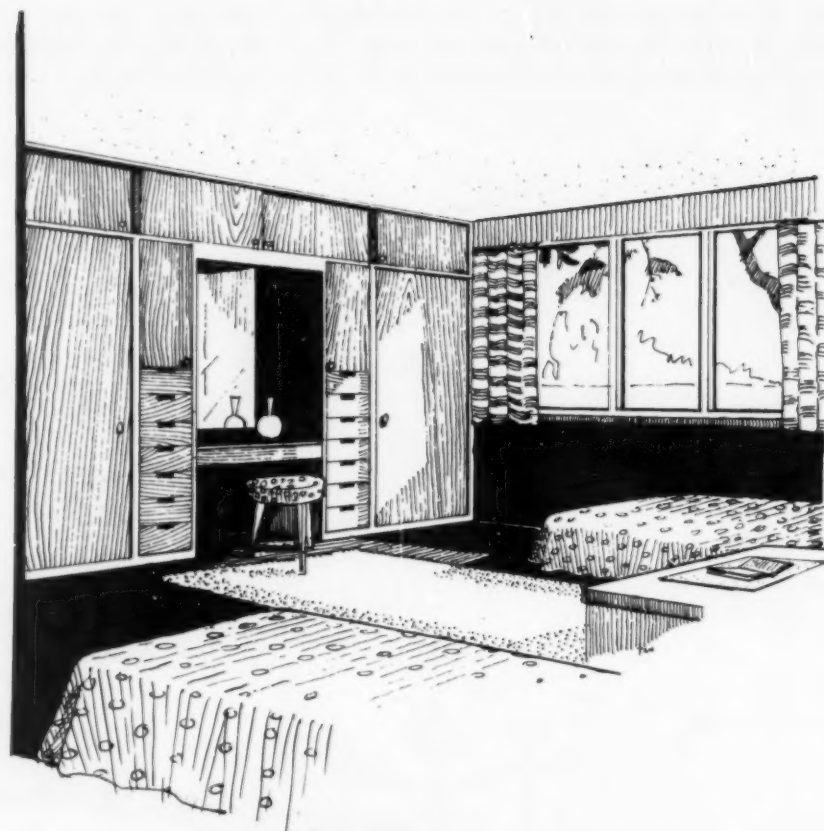




Figure 15. The storage wall in the children's bedroom



The Children's Bedroom

The opposite side of the storage wall, which is between the two bedrooms, is shown above. By using a counter and a mirror in the center, as shown in Figure 15, each child has his own space for clothes storage. Both hang-space and drawer-space are pro-

vided. Extra bedding and seldom-used articles can be stored in the upper part of the wall.

The storage wall simplifies furniture arrangement. Single beds can be used with a study table placed between them. Sufficient floor space is available for the necessary chairs.

CONSTRUCTION

As previously mentioned, concrete or cinder block construction is shown. The floor is an insulated concrete slab with extra insulation embedded in it around the outside edge.

A warm-air heating system is used, with the heated air delivered to the rooms through high registers. The cold air is carried back to the furnace through tunnels incorporated in the floor.

The hot water heater is located in the utility room. Bathroom plumbing fixtures, the laundry tray, the washer, and the kitchen sink are all in an approximately straight line with the water heater. Drainage from the kitchen sink joins that from the laundry tray and washer and is then carried to the soil pipe into which the bathroom fixtures drain. From there it empties into the septic tank line leading off toward the drying yard area.

SUMMARY

A review of the desires expressed by farm families, page 3, and a study of the plan, will show how the wanted features have been incorporated.

The house is integrated with the plot — driveway, garden, drying yard, and outdoor living areas — and is oriented to assure easy traffic between the house and the other farm buildings.

The arrangement of space within the structure results in a house that will serve the family rather than forcing the family to adjust to the house.

Complete working drawings for this design are available for a nominal fee. Inquiries concerning them should be addressed to the Department of Housing and Design, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

No bill of materials or cost estimates are included. These are omitted because of variations in different parts of the State. Local materials dealers and local builders are the best sources of such information.